

## Matthew at the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium Health Professions Collaborative

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Matthew was in a horrible car accident, which left him dependent on Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and Food Stamps and unable to work for a long time. At 29 years old, he dreamed of an opportunity to do something meaningful with his life.

In the early spring of 2012, Matthew responded to a flyer for the Pharmacy Technician training program at Erie Community College. Erie Community College is a key partner of the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium, one of 32 Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. He did not know what to expect but was looking for opportunities. He was receiving public assistance and wanted his independence. He had always liked chemistry, and pharmacy was a respected field, so he gave the training program a try.

He was pleasantly surprised to find out that the training was a "real class." It was more like a condensed college course than other training courses he had attended in the past. Matt did well with the classroom instruction and was able to meet the expectations required in the course, but he really began to shine as a Pharmacy Technician intern at Ivylea Prescription and Home Health Care Center. His internship experience introduced him to positive role models who encouraged him to pursue an education in pharmacy.

Matthew was eager to please and impressed his supervising pharmacist with the skills he had learned in class. As a result of his positive attitude and capabilities, he was hired on a part-time basis at Ivylea, where he continued to build his knowledge of pharmacy and professional relationships.

Currently, he is still employed full time at Ivy Lea Pharmacy and attending Erie Community College at night, maintaining an outstanding grade point average. Matthew views Pharmacy Technician as the "first step on the career ladder," and he is excited about the future opportunities. His goal now is to get into University of Buffalo School of Pharmacy and become a Pharmacist. He feels that the HPOG program was a life-changing experience for him.